

**CHICAGO** – After completing a five-day mission to China regarding food safety and Olympic security, U.S. Representative Mark Kirk today outlined actions needed to protect Americans from poison food and dangerous toys made in China. China is the top importer of goods flown into O'Hare Airport. In 2005, O'Hare received 308 million pounds of goods from China.

Kirk, the co-chairman of the bipartisan U.S.-China Working Group, met in Beijing with the head of China's General Administration for Quality Supervision, Vice Minister Wei Chuanzhang, China's top product inspector. China recently executed the head of its Food and Drug Administration for corruption. Vice Minister Wei said that China is preparing legislation scheduled to pass by the end of the year to improve food and toy safety.

"While I appreciated China's promised reform, I think Congress should go much further and faster," Congressman Kirk said. "Congress should require at least two dozen FDA and Consumer Product Safety Commission inspectors to approve goods inbound to the United States. While China will pass new inspection legislation by the end of the year, Congress should pass U.S. inspection legislation by the end of this month."

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Kirk told officials in Beijing that Chinese action alone will not be enough. He called for Congress to pass legislation this month to deploy U.S. inspectors from the FDA and Consumer Product Safety Commission to China. This action would be mandated by Kirk's bipartisan Import Safety Act of 2007 (H.R. 3100) introduced last month. The bill would also increase fines against importers for dangerous imported toys from \$500,000 to \$50 million.

Kirk met with the U.S. Ambassador to China, Sandy Randt, who outlined ways the U.S. embassy could make room for new U.S. inspectors. Randt stated that with sufficient backing from Congress, the U.S. embassy in Beijing could handle the deployment of new U.S. food and toy inspectors.

Kirk also met with Chinese officials in charge of protecting U.S. athletes who would compete at the August 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. He urged China's number three leader, Wu Bangguo, to unstick the approval of a U.S. security plan for the games. The U.S. put forward an Olympic security plan in April and has yet to receive formal Chinese approval.

"The United States and China have a strong interest in protecting the Olympic Games from

terrorists. China's rapid approval of the U.S. security plan will lower the possibility of Al Qaeda or any other terrorist group to harm our athletes."